

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – October 28, 2020
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey NH
and remotely using Zoom Meeting

Note: Draft Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Board. Review and approval of Minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Selectman Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. at 5:30 pm at Whitcomb Hall Main Street, Swanzey, NH and remotely using Zoom Meeting. Present at Whitcomb Hall were W. William Hutwelker, Sylvester Karasinski and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley. Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard was present via Zoom.

OTHERS PRESENT

Assessor Dave Marazoff via Zoom, Director of Planning and Economic Development Matthew Bachler, Health Officer & Emergency Management Director Pam Fortner, Solid Waste Manager Josh Whipple, Code Enforcement Officer Mike Jasmin, Fire Chief Bill Gould

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the regular meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***
- The Non-public meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the Non-public meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Hutwelker to approve the Consent Agenda. There was a second by Karasinski. There was no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. ***Motion passed.***

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Personnel Action Report(s)
- Winter Maintenance Statement

PUBLIC INPUT/COVID-19 Update – after nominations

The public was able to participate remotely over Zoom by going to www.zoom.us, using Zoom App on a cell phone, or on a landline calling 1 929 205 6099 and entering Meeting ID 822 7186 9650. If the public is unable to access the meeting, they are asked to call 352-7411 ext. 107.

NOMINATIONS

The Board considered the appointment of Rachel Elkins as Conservation Commission Alternate, Joely Fanning as Conservation Commission Alternate and Cheri Domina Conservation Commission member.

Hutwelker **moved** to make the following appointments: Rachel Elkins as a Conservation Commission alternate with a term ending Town Meeting 2021, Joely Fanning as a Conservation Commission alternate with a term ending Town Meeting 2022, and Cheri Domina as a member

of the Conservation Commission with a term ending Town Meeting 2023. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

APPOINTMENTS

Assessor Dave Marazoff – Application for Residence in an Industrial or Commercial Zone Assessment.

Marazoff was present and said he was present to discuss the request for a residence in an industrial district. Marazoff said an applicant may apply on or before April 15 for a special appraisal of the residence of that year. He said there is a form to fill out. He said the base rates in the commercial zone areas are typically higher. He said in assessing properties he does assess downward somewhat predicated on sales. He said sales are not similar to sales in residential areas. He said it is similar to applying for Current Use. He said there is a recreational discount on top of current use. He said it is based on land value; that land is going to be valued higher on Route 12. He said he would look at land portion of value as comparable in a residence district. Marazoff said the requester must apply annually. Marazoff said the applicant, Mike McGrath, was informed he was late for filing for 2019 but for 2020 he did file in a timely manner. Hutwelker asked if the applicant filed early enough Marazoff said McGrath filed his application before April and he said he (Marazoff) may be guilty of sitting on the form. Hutwelker asked if the application is signed does that allow Marazoff to review the property specifically. Hutwelker said there is not an agreement in reduction in value (by signing), but you are recognizing there is a residential use in a commercial district. Hutwelker said the application could be denied. Marazoff said yes, and the application must be for property that is a primary residence and not for business use. Hutwelker asked if there is a deed restriction on the property so it cannot be used for commercial business. Marazoff said when PA 42 is signed, you are attesting that you are not using it for a commercial business. Marazoff said you must file annually. Hutwelker said there is a special exception pending for residential use in a business zone. He said that is a reduction in assessed value and he is not pleased about that. Marazoff said the RSA exists and it is proper. He said it is limited in its use. Multi-family properties won't qualify for this. He said it is for the homeowner who is using his property strictly for residential, while it is residential.

Hutwelker asked Marazoff to take a look at 7 Young Court and Marazoff agreed to do so.

Director of Planning & Economic Development Matthew Bachler – 2021 Budget & Requested Release of “Paper” Street.

Bachler was present to discuss his department's 2021 budget request and to discuss a request the Town has received to discontinue a “paper” street (meaning it only exists on paper / plans) shown on the plan as Hillside Ave. Bachler was present at Whitcomb Hall. He spoke about an increase in line item for Community Development Consulting to \$6,000. He said this amount is needed in case there are recommendations for additional studies from the update in the Master Plan. Otherwise he said the budget is level funded. Bachler said Tri-Town is on hold for now. There is \$10,000 for Consulting and related work but nothing for Tri-Town. There were no questions from the Board.

Paper Street

Bachler spoke about a request from Fieldstone Land Consultants for property owners on West Shore Road, Lot 61-12 and Lot 61-13. He spoke about a paper street that exists and when Fieldstone did a survey of the land, they found a road planned in 1929 called Hillside Avenue, which runs between the two lots and was never developed. The property owner wants to build a home and needs frontage on W. Shore Road in order to build. The Board would need to approve the release of that paper street. He asked the Board if they are in support of this and if so, they will go through the process. Hutwelker said if we are going to spend legal fees for this, we should review all of the paper streets for the

campground. He encouraged using Attorney Sam Bradley who may have done a good portion of the work. Bachler said he would consult with Bradley.

Fire Ponds

Bachler updated the Board about Fire Ponds: he said a working group was formed to re-visit a water resources review. Six projects were recommended to the Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIPC). The projects would benefit commercial areas and some residential areas like at the base of Arrowcrest Drive. He mentioned Martin Brook hydrant as a possibility. And update other hydrants. Dredge and replace the hydrants at the high school at the South Branch of the Ashuelot River. He noted potential plans for putting in a pond at Nissan of Keene and at Whittemore Farm Road, both of which could possibly be eligible for grant money. He noted that should these come to pass the Town would ask property owners to contribute funds as well.

Broadband efforts

Bachler said while working on the Improving project with Southwest Region Planning Commission a request for information from providers was made and Consolidated responded. Bachler spoke about customers who do not have broadband and those who do. For the most part, none of their customers have broadband except for Swanzey Center. He noted anecdotal evidence from locals about lack of broadband. Bachler said he spoke to other communities and it is not uncommon to get one or two responses. Hutwelker noted the bonding done by other communities. Bachler asked about support from the Board for the bonding effort since it will take a fair amount of time of staff. Hutwelker suggested contacting Spectrum about the possibility of moving to broadband with something other than Spectrum. Hutwelker said the Town of Chesterfield did work with Consolidated but they did not have Spectrum as a provider. Karasinski asked for a survey to learn how many users would go to broadband if it were available. The Board thanked Bachler and he left the meeting.

Health Officer & Emergency Management Director Pam Fortner – 2021 Budget

Fortner was present at Whitcomb Hall. She said the only change is for Telephone line item. Hutwelker asked if Fortner was taking her compensation. She said she is but is not travelling much and mostly doing online trainings. She said the budget request is not different from last year. She noted Emergency Management is same as last year as well. Fortner said a grant is in the works to update the Town's Emergency Operations Plan. The Board thanked Fortner and she left the meeting.

Road Naming

The Board discussed Thompson Lane which is a dead end street off Swanzey Factory Road. It does not currently have a street sign and the properties on it have Swanzey Factory Road addresses. Colby spoke about a possible name for that road and said Branley came up with a list. Colby said the Board can decide about naming the road. Hutwelker said the road ought to be discontinued. Karasinski said to punt for a week and review maps to see what else is up there. Colby agreed to table the issue until next week after some research.

Solid Waste Manager Josh Whipple – 2021 Budget

Whipple was present at Whitcomb Hall. Whipple said the large increase is 3% for Waste Management disposal services. He said the increase this year has been for electronics, tires, and scrap metal. He said it is a straight-forward budget this year. Whipple said Fall of 2021 will be date to renegotiate contract with Waste Management. Whipple said he hopes to staff summer work next year with someone who doesn't need to work year-round. Whipple spoke about moving balers, so he can pull work inside the building for the winter months. He is working with a metal company to get rid of old baler. Whipple spoke about keeping the paper and cardboard dry over the winter. Whipple spoke about tasks that staff

is working on right now. Hutwelker said the employees have been put through a lot and asked for ways to improve their situation for the summer. He asked Whipple to look into someone to take care of hornets and bees in the summer. Whipple said he would follow up on those suggestions from Hutwelker. The Board thanked Whipple for his work. Hutwelker told Whipple to thank the staff for their work in a difficult situation as Whipple was leaving the meeting.

Recreation Director Ashlee Crosby – Field Use Agreements. Crosby discussed with the Board some concerns / suggestions regarding changes to the field-use agreements. Crosby said she didn't know why the field agreements exist but she is agreeable to working with them if communication issues can be resolved. She said a 3-year agreement may be too long. She said both Lane Fields and Brown Field agreement have expired. Lanes Field expired in August. Brown Field agreement was up in September. Crosby said former Recreation Director Aaron Cherry did not inform her about these agreements. She noted field schedules are complicated. She said she wants to make agreements work so that there are not scheduling conflicts and about who touches what. Crosby said there are a lot of folks to try to communicate with. She said it is best to open up the conversation with the Board and the organizations to break down barriers to communication. Branley noted there is a lot of history with the folks who are involved. She said she is okay with one-year agreement to allow her to feel it out and get to know what a whole season is like. She asked for a one-year extension. Branley said in the past the users wanted more years so the current three year agreement was a compromise, but he agreed that one year would give Crosby a better idea what she is working with. She said there are many changes she would like to make. She said she wants data and evidence to support changes. Karasinski agreed with Crosby. Hutwelker said he supports Crosby and supports for one year, with an idea of having 3-year agreement in the future since there is too much time spent on annual agreements. Colby agreed Crosby has a good approach. Crosby said communication is the issue. There was a discussion about business cards and maybe a shirt that says Rec Director. She said she did two trainings to help out with Town Hall with ballots. She will be certified by November 16th to work the Town Clerk window. The Board thanked Crosby and she left the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Requested Expenditure – Fire Station #3 Roof Replacement.

Discussion was held regarding three proposals (Melanson, 603 Roofing, and Guyer & Sons) to replace the roof at Station #3. Mike Jasmin was present at Whitcomb Hall. He said Fire Chief Gould got three bids, but the quotes are all a little different. He said they are now drilling down on the specifications required. Jasmin said he expects the Town will end up with two complete bids. Jasmin said they are waiting for Guyer & Sons and 603 Roofing to re-bid based on the specifications. There was a discussion on the type of roof to be done. Hutwelker asked Jasmin to check on a Vermont company that has been used in the past for the former Homestead Woolen Mill. Jasmin said the schedule and warranty are issues to be worked out. He said there is no insulation there. Chief Bill Gould said there is a weather-related issue with the roof, and he said there is a leak at back. He said he would like to get it done before winter sets in. There was discussion about the availability of roofers since they appear to be very busy right now.

There was a brief discussion about windows and doors.

OLD BUSINESS

321 Old Homestead Highway Demolition Update

Jasmin said the latest number he has for removal of remaining asbestos and other materials is \$75,000. The Board agreed to table this matter.

2020 Tax Rate

Branley said has no news as they are still waiting for School District numbers.

OTHER BUSINESS

Public Meetings

Branley said the Board should start to think about how they would like to handle some upcoming public informational meetings for projects this year. He asked the Board to think about how they might want to handle large public meetings. Branley said a Screen Share could be used during a Zoom meeting. Branley said when all are on Zoom it is easy for folks to see the same things. He noted a variety of ways to have meetings such as all in person or a hybrid, partially in person and partially via Zoom. He said thinking about these ideas will help with the decision about how to handle budget hearings. Karasinski asked if the Annex at the High School might be available.

Back-up Agreement between DiLuzio and the City of Keene

Branley said the signed agreement has been received.

Auction schedule

Branley said the Town-owned property behind the Knotty Pine property will be going up for auction. Karasinski asked what is going in at the Knotty Pine property and Branley said it is a storage unit facility.

Fire Call on Monday

Branley said during the fire call on Monday one of the Town Hall employees had an adverse reaction to the fumes coming from the fire trucks beneath Town Hall. He stated the employee and/or their family members may come to an upcoming meeting to express their concerns and help bring awareness to the issue.

Early Ballot

Branley spoke about an email received from a citizen of the town in regard to difficulty that person had when attempting to leave a ballot for a spouse at Town Hall. Branley said there are rules for such that must be followed. Hutwelker said there is a form asking for a ballot in addition to the ballot itself and the form provides instructions for having a substitute/caregiver deliver a ballot for an individual.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Hutwelker. The motion was seconded by Karasinski without further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 6:48 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary
Approved on November 3, 2020